
EVENING BULLETIN.

POTATOES.—On soil suitable for their production, there is no more profitable crop raised in this vicinity than Irish potatoes, and, notwithstanding the severe droughts of two of the last three seasons, which greatly diminished the yield, we feel assured that, for the last six or seven years, it has produced about as much net profit to the farmer as any other crop.

A good grass sod, well broken up in the fall, is probably the most certain of any other land to produce a good crop of large, sound potatoes. There is among the shippers so decided a preference for the "Neshanoe" that nearly all persons who raise this crop for shipment plant mostly of this kind. It is a well known fact that nearly all the finer kinds of potatoes are less productive than the less nutritious varieties about in proportion to their relative value for the table, but from some cause the Neshanoe seems to be less productive than some other sorts that are nearly or quite as good in quality.

This in many instances may arise from the fact that this variety being more in demand, at high prices, has led to the use of seed which is too small and immature in this variety, while others less in demand have not been picked quite so close.

Many experiments have been tried to test the relative value of large and small potatoes for seed. The results have not been conclusive, for the reason that no one has tested them fairly for a series of years, which is the only way to arrive at satisfactory conclusions. From all we can gather, we incline to the opinion that medium sized potatoes, uncut, will be found to produce the largest crop of merchantable potatoes. If any one wishes to test the matter fairly, we suggest that they select from the same lot say a pound each of large, medium, and small potatoes and plant all in similar soil, uncut; and another pound of large potatoes, cut; cultivated alike, and the information obtained will be well worth all the trouble it will cost. As we said before, we prefer medium sized potatoes for seed, and, for early planting particularly, should prefer them planted uncut, as the cut pieces are more liable to be injured by cold, wet weather.

The ground for the potato crop should be broken up in the fall, if possible, so as to be ready for planting the first suitable weather in March. The earlier they can be planted the better.

Some persons are under the impression that it is not necessary to plow deep for potatoes; but, if they have noticed the decided advantage of deep plowing for this crop during the last dry season, we think they will change their opinion. It is true that the tubers are not formed deep in the ground, but the fibrous roots by which they are sustained will extend as deep as you can find means to open the soil for them, and, if encouraged to delve beyond the influence of the dry, hot surface, so much more sure are you of a large crop for your pains.

In regard to the best method of planting, some different opinions prevail. Some good crops have been produced by planting two sets in hills two and a half feet apart, and this method admits of cultivating both ways. In soil much infested with rank growing weeds this way is probably the best. The usual method is to drop the sets eight or ten inches apart in rows two and a half to three feet apart; indeed this method is almost universal in this locality, yet some think there is an advantage in dropping two sets together 18 or 20 inches apart in the row. We have tried this method several times in fields planted in the ordinary way, by dropping several alternate rows in this manner, but could never discover the least difference.

The general practice is to throw the earth to the vines at the last working, so as to form ridges more or less high; some have advised instead that the soil should be kept level, and the cultivator only be used to lay by the crop. No doubt, in seasons of great drouth, if the early workings have been done with an instrument that kept the soil mellow to a considerable depth, this level culture is the best, as there is less surface exposed to evaporation than those thrown up into sharp ridges; and it is sometimes the case that the plant puts out new roots above the tubers when thus earthed up, which are not of any benefit to the crop, if indeed they do not injure it by arresting the elaborated sap as it returns from the leaves, to the formation of a second crop of young tubers instead of increasing the size of those already formed. This second series of roots are also so near the surface, that if, as is supposed, they sustain the vigor of the top to a later period in a seasonable year, they are more liable to be cut off by drouth in a dry one than those which extend deeper into the earth. We think that whatever tends to produce a second growth of fibrous roots after the tubers are formed must be injurious to the crop.

In regard to the kind of potatoes to plant, fashion governs this matter as much as any other. There are several kinds of potatoes quite as good as Neshanoe and more productive, but they are not in demand, and hence, except for family use, they are not profitable. Seed potatoes brought from the North have been found more productive than those raised in this vicinity. There is a large coarse potato known as the "long red" or horse potato, which, though very inferior during the fall and winter, are really fine late in the spring when other kinds begin to deteriorate. Every farmer should grow a few of these for family use late in the spring. They are very productive.

It is a common opinion that potatoes will mix when different varieties are grown together. We hold this to be impossible. The opinion is no doubt based upon the fact that the most carefully selected seed will in a few years contain many inferior sorts. This is no doubt to be attributed to the fact that the inferior kinds increase more rapidly than the best kinds, with which they are mixed; so that a single small tuber, which may have escaped notice in a lot of fine Neshanoe seed, by producing several small potatoes each year will greatly increase the probability of being included, and thus they are gradually increased each season.

A writer in the Genesee Farmer thus speaks of seed potatoes:

A very important object in planting potatoes is to have sound seed of a good variety. All who have planted the same kind of potato a number of years on the same farm know that the potato will run out or get watery and hollow in the heart, and the evil increases every year, whatever the season may be. Such potatoes can be restored to their former soundness, with the loss of only one season, in the following manner: Save back two or three bushels of potatoes for six or seven weeks after the usual time of planting—say until the last of June—then plant them in the usual manner. They will not be ready to dig till a frost has wilted the vines. On digging them then, they will be found to be quite small;

save them carefully till spring, and plant them at the usual planting time, and if the season is favorable they will produce large potatoes and as sound as ever that variety was originally.

CHARLES SEAGAR,
Waverly, Morgan co., Ill.

The deterioration of potatoes when grown on the same soil for a number of years has been remarked in some localities, while in others the same seed has been used for 20 years without any apparent falling off either in size, quality, or quantity. The suitability of the soil to the crop doubtless has much to do with the quality for seed, and, where there is no falling off in any respect, no time should be lost in obtaining other seed. The plan of planting a portion of the crop late is sometimes practiced by persons under the belief that the produce is dryer and better-flavored for winter and spring use. It may be that it has a beneficial effect on seed potatoes; at least it seems worth a trial. The late crop is always smaller than that planted early, and in seasons like the last it would most likely be just nothing at all.

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Jan. 1, 1857.—J. PRATHER, SMITH, & CO.

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JAMES L. CRUTCHER,

JNO. A. MILLER.

Louisville, Jan. 1, 1857.

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JNO. A. MILLER, associated with him in business

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